

From: "okwheatgrws@pldi.net%inter2" <okwheatgrws@pldi.net>
Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 09/26/2005 02:00 PM CDT
Date Sent: 09/26/2005 02:00:19 CDT
Date Received: 09/26/2005 02:03:06 CDT

Email: okwheatgrws@pldi.net

FirstName: Tim

LastName: Bartram

Address1: P.O Box 3246

Address2:

City: Enid

State: Oklahoma

zipcode: 73702

Question1: Oklahoma Wheat Growers Assn members strongly believe that in order for America to continue producing the safest and most abundant food supply in the world, new generations need to be encouraged to enter farming. OWGA therefore supports financing programs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

However, OWGA members also believe that if farming were profitable, young farmers would enter the field without needing extra encouragement. Therefore U.S. wheat producers believe that there needs to be a focus on making farming profitable, rather than encouraging the next generation to enter an unprofitable business.

For those willing to take the risk of entering production agriculture, there is the need for financing. The current USDA Beginning farmer program needs improvement. The need to hire someone to fill out the application is a major concern. Also the limited availability of those funds is a problem. Another idea that needs acted on is one of a program to match up interested beginning farmers with farmers wanting to retire with no one to take over. Incentives to encourage retiring producers to sell or lease to beginning farmers would also help.

Question2: U.S. wheat producers want to be able to compete on a level playing field in the global marketplace. However, producers in many other nations have much lower production costs due to lower labor rates, less environmental regulations, and other factors, putting American producers at a disadvantage.

Therefore, Oklahoma Wheat Growers Assn members support the full preservation of domestic support within the commodity title at no less than the amount authorized in the 2002 Farm bill, but recognize the importance of all countries moving toward less trade-distorting policies.

U.S. wheat producers also need access to new markets. Currently, the U.S. exports nearly half of the wheat crop annually, and export programs such as the Market Assistance Program and Foreign Market Development Corporations also play an important role in the industry's ability to enter new markets. OWGA supports the continuation and expansion of these market access programs, and the development of new and creative export programs, such as tax credits (without the reduction of income support mechanisms) that provide a way for producers compete worldwide. The process of limiting access to a market by the US Government for very debatable reasons is un-acceptable for example Cuba.

Question3: OWGA believes that farmers who are successful should be able to grow and expand their businesses as they like, without the fear of losing the safety net that they have relied on during times of

drought and other hard times.

U.S. wheat producers, like most family farmers would like to expand their operations and plant and harvest more acres. While the amount of farm payments is currently limited by the 2002 Farm Bill, Wheat growers continue to believe that maintaining the current payment limit structure of \$40,000 for a Direct Payments or further lowering it punishes the producers that have made their operations a success.

OWGA also opposes any kinds of means testing for eligibility or to restrict participation in federal farm programs.

Question4: OWGA supports the current program structure if it is streamlined and simplified. For example greater data sharing between programs would allow a general sign-up be used to determine which program would be best suited to the conservation needs of a producer.

The biggest problem has been an under funding of existing conservation title programs. The Conservation Security Program needs to be fully funded with mandatory funding as originally intended. The concept of "priority watersheds" should be abolished and all qualified producers should be eligible for participation.

The Conservation Reserve Program should be refocused on those most environmentally sensitive highly erodible lands. Acreage under expiring CRP contracts, not re-enrolled in CRP but placed back in production should have original program base acres restored.

Conservation program funding should not be used to offset or supplant existing commodity title program funding.

Question5: . I have had the pleasure and honor to judge farm organizations youth speech contests as they generally consist of Future Farmers of America and 4-H organizations. I am proud to see these youngsters that have their heart in agriculture and have the desire to continue on in the field of agriculture. It deeply saddens me to think that we might be leading them astray. As it is right now, these kids' families have either one or both parents working off the farm to sustain an agriculture life style or perhaps to stay on the family farm. There are very few farmers in the state of Oklahoma that make a living strictly from agriculture. These farmers are driving a truck of their own or for someone else, working in the oil patch or stocking shelves at the local Wal-Mart. I would like to refer to these farmers as bi-vocationists. As the trend continues and the prospects of making a living on the farm declines greatly, I would propose to you that there needs to be some type of program established in the form of economic development zones just as they have done in Harlem, New York City, New York and Watts, Los Angeles, California. I do not see why these same things cannot be done in rural America. These zones need to be established in each and every county that is heavily involved in agriculture production. These zones could be overseen by the county commissioners with the emphasis on tax incentives and accelerated depreciation of equipment that would enhance existing businesses to either grow or new businesses to relocate to these rural areas so those involved in agriculture can have the opportunity for a part time job and continue their agricultural activities. I am convinced with special funding to these zones from the Rural Utilities Services and with help from the local rural electric cooperatives and also special funding from the Farmers Home Administration to help with water and sewer problems that might arise~ that these special county economic development zones

or industrial parks can flourish and provide a viable alternative and a place for farm households to become more bi-vocational and hopefully not tri-vocational. Our only consolation is that right now we have the enjoyment of living where the rich people want to live which is right here in the beautiful Oklahoma country.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

W. Kent McAninch 12500 So. 29th Street Tonkaw~ OK 74653

Question6: In order to be able to compete in a world market, focus must always be kept on quality, and progress on quality starts with research. Wheat should have a stronger presence in the next research title with an equal emphasis on cereal disease research and on new and improved traits and quality. Research to complete the mapping of the wheat genome should be a high priority. Funding for research remains an annual struggle for an ever shrinking share of research dollars. Consideration should be given to identifying a dedicated revenue stream that could provide a stable ongoing base for research funding.

There also needs to be a better balance of funding between theoretical and practical research, while theoretical research is extremely important as the basis for future practical research we have put too much emphasis on this area. We need greater emphasis of research on practices which can be used now. Also the idea to go to all competitive funding is a mistake. Our land grant colleges and universities need the base line funding to maintain infrastructure in order for research to take place.